

REVIEW.

Saturday, March 28. 1713.

THE Fury of the Times being exerted most at this time by the *Pen* and *Ink*, it is not to be wonder'd at, that part of that *Salt* and *Fire* which People spit at one another, comes up to what we call *Lampoon*, *Pasquinade*, *Ballad* and *Satire*: In all Reigns, and, for ought I know, in all Ages has more or less been so.

But I cannot but make one Observation as I go, viz.) That the Lampoons of this Age differ very much from those that we have seen in former Times; and tho', *at the same time*, we pretend much to have a degree of Politic Wit beyond those Days; yet nothing of that keenness of Satyr, the happy turns and rightness of Fancy appears in the Lampoons of this Age, that were seen in *Andr. Marvel, Sir John Denham, Rochester, Buckingham, Buckhurst, Sidley*, and others, *the Wits of that Day*; nay, give *Sing-Song* his due, even his Ballads *out did us exceeding*: What wretched Stuff have we seen in our public Prints on both sides, one as well as t'other, which was for Satyr!

Not that the Gall runs lower at all, *for* never two parties contended with so much Animosity; but the much Malice is mingled with so much *less* Wit, that I think nothing is so Silly and Surfeiting as those two of them that I have seen, take them which way you will, whether on one side against the Duke of Marlborough, or on the other against my Lord Treasurer or the Queen, there's no great odds in them.

I remember in the Days of King *Charles* the II^d. some of the bitterest Invectives against him, when set into Lampoons, were cover'd with such a be-
witching Fancy, and such a flood of Wit, that the King himself would laugh at them, and be pleas'd with them: And who can help, tho' never so severely pleas'd with the Wit of the incomparable *Eludibras*?

The Dialogue between the two Horses so pleas'd the King, that tho' it was the bitterest Satyr, upon *him and his Father*, that ever was made, the King could often repeat them with a great deal of Pleasure, and particularly these that follow.

*But I should ha' told you before the Jades parted,
Both gallop'd to White-Hall, and there humbly fa . . ed ;
Which Monarchy's downfall portended much more,
Than all that the Beasts had been saying before :
For if the Delphick, and Sybil, Oracular Speeches,
As Learned Men say, come forth from their Breeches :
Why might not our Horſes, ſince Words are but Wind,
Have the Spirit of Prophecy likewise behind ?*

Let us see any thing so sprightly now from the Wits of this Age, and something may be said for them: A Pasquinade ought to be pointing like a Dart, that should wound Mortally at every cast; the Sting should be so very sharp, that it should kill even all the Resentment of the Persons Satyriz'd: so that the Person pointed at should be ashamed to be Angry; or if he was, he should do as the generous Duke of *Buckingham* did to Mr. *Dryden*, for his Satyr upon him in his *Absalom* and *Achitophel* — when he first Can'd him, and then gave him a Purse of Gold: *That's for your ill Language*, Sir, said the Duke, when he Can'd him: And then giving him the Gold, *here Sir*, said his Grace, *and that's for your Wit*. When such Satyrs as these appear, I can not think any Government, or Minister of State, or General in this Age, would resent them.

But when *Dirt* throws *Dirt*, when great Men made the Scorn and Contempt of Parties, and in ribaldry that has nothing but Rage in it; no Fancy, no Brightness; there's nothing to keep the stench out of our Noses; a Man cannot say it is done clean; and therefore I have long wonder'd to see how our People on both sides *bug*, and *band about* such weak and empty Pieces, as their Fathers would not have vouchsafed to look at: But it is an Evidence of the Ascendant Rage has got over our Senses, which has debauch'd the taste of Wit: Indeed our Party Feuds have something so melancholy in them, they leave no room for the Nation's Genius to smile; to be Merry with them, is like laughing at a Funeral, or making a Ballad upon a Murder. And this I take to be the Reason, for when the Passions swell beyond their ordinary, the Springs are wound up too high.

high to Chime, there's no Musick in their Strife at all.

Let no Man mistake me now, and suggest that I am pointing at the Accident that happen'd this Week, in taking up some honest People for handing about a Paper reflecting on the Queen; I had no view that way at all — I am upon the Papers themselves, not the handing them about — I pity the Misfortune of the People, tho' I am very sorry for the sake of others, *more than of the Sufferers*, that this happen'd in that Place; however, I never prompt Justice upon any one, I scorn it, and therefore shall say nothing to it, only this in general, We are caution'd in Scripture not to suffer *as evil doers*; and I think all wise Men should take care not to suffer *as Fools*.

As to handing Treasonable Papers about in Coffee Houses, *every body knows* it was the Original of the very thing call'd a Coffee-House, and that it is the very Profession of a Coffee-Man to do so, and it seems hard to punish any of them for it: And this was the Reason why in King Charles's time there was once a Proclamation in the Press to put down all the Coffee-Houses in London; (*Note, by the way, there was not so many as there are now*) because they were Broachers of Treason; upon which Dr. Wild made his famous Verses, which ended thus,

*Then Charles thine Edicts against Coffee recall,
There's ten times more Treason in Brandy and Ale.*

It being then so natural, nay, so essential to our Coffee-House-Keepers, to gratify their Customers with a Secret out of the Bar, a bit of Treason by the by; and that it was so in the beginning, *is now*, and always *will be so*; I cannot but hope it shall plead in the favour of the good People now in trouble; and that is the best I can say for it; only by way of Caution to somebody else, *were Hawk* is the Word, have a care *T—B—, I—M—, R—C—, M—B—, G—N—*, and forty more — *Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum*; and so much for the Coffee-Houses.

But why must we argue now from the Paper to the Persons? I see some very fond to have it be said, That the Crime of this Matter lies in the Persons who were to read this Paper at the Coffee House; but I can by no means allow that Reflection to be

just, unless it was peculiar to that Coffee-House more than another, or that none but such People came there — But this will be always said, There never was a Child, but if it had a Mother it had a Nurse: When a Malicious thing is written it will be read, and itching Ears are not the plague of this Age alone; the Crime is not in Reading but Writing; let the Author stand clear; he that Prints Treason had need have good Workmen, or no Workmen at all.

But this is not the meaning of my Observations. I am upon the matter of these Papers, not the manner of dispersing them; and I do confess, as I say above, it is my Opinion, that the Satyr of this part of our Age are so mean, in comparison of the last, that I believe the next will never think them worth Collecting, as the last were, into six Volumes of State Poems — And above all, I must needs say, I think I have not seen one yet that is worth an Author's marching from *Newgate* to *Aldgate* for; if any Author thinks otherwise, he is very welcome to make the Experiment.

If the great Men, whether *in* or *out*, must be Banter'd and Satyriz'd, I would fain persuade our Poets to go about it like Poets; that is, like Men of Sense and Men of Wit; and let it be done sharp and clever, suitable to the Quality of the Persons and the Dignity of Satyr. I am persuaded, if it be Censur'd *then*, and you come to any trouble for it, the Wit of it will help you out a little, at least you will obtain some Compassion: *Hang him, it is a mitty Rogue, it's pity he should be ruin'd*, said King Charles the II. of *Harry Care*, and would not let him be Prosecuted, when an Indictment was order'd against him, because what he said was clean and sharp; but no Man pities a Fool.

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